

Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



Cooperating Agencies Fact Sheet

The Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan (MRERP) and Environmental Impact Statement will be developed using a transparent, scientific, and collaborative process. The ultimate success of the plan depends on having early and sustained input from a full range of basin stakeholders.

The goal of this broad collaborative process is to find the most effective and implementable alternatives to restore ecosystem functions, mitigate habitat losses, and recover native fish and wildlife on the Missouri River, while seeking balance with social, economic, and cultural values for future generations.

Engaging Potential Participants

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) hopes to encourage broad participation in this planning process. As part of this process, the USACE will be reaching out to the public during numerous opportunities. It will also conduct consultation with the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC), as directed by Section 5018 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, and tribal governments consistent with the USACE tribal consultation policies. In addition, USACE will consult with other governmental entities that may have regulatory jurisdiction or consultation requirements. In order to assist in the development of the plan, the USACE is also developing a cooperating agency team (CAT).

Cooperating Agencies

The USACE invites tribal and state governments and federal agencies that have jurisdictional authority or special expertise to participate as formal cooperating agencies for the MRERP. Cooperating agencies will form a CAT. The CAT will help develop the plan and provide recommendations and reviews consistent with their jurisdiction or special expertise, while working closely with the USACE.

Technical Teams

As needed, the CAT will establish technical teams to provide in-depth guidance, information, and product development regarding specialized technical subjects. Technical teams will be assembled and suspended on an as-needed basis to provide expertise and content regarding specific technical subjects. Tech Team members will consist of CAT and MRRIC members, or their appointees, with demonstrated expertise in the appropriate subject matter area.

Planning Participants in the MRERP Process

The figure below illustrates the participants that will be involved in the development of the MRERP. The CAT will be involved in almost every step of the planning process, whereas Technical Teams will be assembled as needed for specific tasks.



Reasons to Get Involved in the Process

The Missouri River ecosystem is of extraordinary importance and value and its health directly impacts the resources managed by federal agencies and state and tribal governments. Participation in the planning process will directly benefit cooperating agencies, since in this role they will help shape how decisions are made for the Missouri River ecosystem and its resources. Cooperating Agency participation will help define and shape the desired future condition of the ecosystem and develop more sustainable system-wide approaches to restoration. By participating, existing efforts for management and restoration of the system can be integrated and agency and government missions can be fulfilled.

Cooperating Agency Benefits

A number of system-level planning processes have taken place in other areas of the country. Below is a quote from cooperating agencies on the benefits they realized by participating.

“Working collaboratively really challenges people, pushes them to think bigger and more broadly, creatively and longer term....Also allows leveraging of resources.”

– Upper Mississippi River System
Environmental Management Program

“Instead of being reactive to an EIS or permit, a Cooperating Agency is more involved in proposing on the ground activities.”

– Everglades Restoration Plan

Becoming a Cooperating Agency

To become a cooperating agency, simply provide a response letter indicating your intent. Once an agency or government becomes a cooperating agency, they must identify a point of contact (POC) and an alternate POC for this process. The POC must be an employee of the agency or government; have management and/or ecological knowledge of the Missouri River; understand the agency's or government's mission, structure, and institutional function; and have the capacity to access and involve individuals with expertise and management throughout their agency or government.

The Role of the POC

The POC will be the participating member on the CAT. POCs will bring technical expertise or have access to such expertise, to assist in the planning process and recommend sustainable decisions. In addition, they will serve as the representative of the cooperating agency and communicate information back to their agency's decision-makers.

The POC is expected to attend CAT meetings and participate on conference calls between meetings. They will contribute to plan development and reviews, and make recommendations, including identifying individuals with special expertise to participate on technical teams.



Cooperating Agency Level of Effort

The estimated level of effort will fluctuate over the planning period. However, it is estimated that it will likely require between one quarter-time and one full-time employee, depending on the products being developed. This involvement includes the POC and agency personnel working as members of technical teams. While USACE studies like the MRERP are typically cost shared with sponsors, the MRERP does not require sponsors. No cost share is required for the MRERP; however, each agency is asked to provide for their own funds for their staff's engagement in the study.

Tentative Roadmap and Schedule

Developing the Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan is a multi-year effort that is expected to last approximately seven years. The roadmap below identifies four fundamental activity phases of the plan and an estimated timeline.



For more information on the MRERP, please contact:

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